

Impact in Sports Spending During Current Economic Downturn Measured by Seton Hall Sports Poll

Fans, Participants, Show Downward Turns in Attendance, Participation and Purchases of Merchandise, and Health Club Memberships.

Uncertainty Over Buying Cable TV Packages

S. Orange, NJ, November 18, 2008 – The nation's sports fans and participants in sporting activities have signaled downturns in almost every area of spending from ticket and merchandise purchases to participation in events requiring a fee and health club memberships.

The results were determined by a Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted November 11-13, in which 664 randomly called people throughout the United States answered questions to measure the potential impact of the economic downturn which has dominated news coverage since September.

Respondents were asked if they were likely to cut back in things they were already doing. The poll found:

16% of those with health club memberships are likely to cut back on them
47% of golfers are likely to cut back
49% of skiers are likely to cut back
45% of those that purchased team merchandise in the last year are likely to cut back

58% of all respondents said they would be less likely to spend money on entertainment (concerts, movies, sports, theater, etc.), and of those, 76% identified tickets to sporting events as a place they would cut back.

When asked, if they could only buy a ticket to one sport, which would it be, 48% said football to 18% baseball, 16% basketball, 7% hockey and 9% other.

On the subject of purchasing tickets for sporting events, 20% said they would cut back on football tickets, followed by 18% on basketball, 17% on hockey, and 16% on baseball.

"it appears that the American public -- at least the sports crowd -- is already feeling the economic pinch or at least anticipating feeling it," said Rick Gentile, director of the Seton Hall Sports Poll, conducted by The Sharkey Institute. "It's not just theoretical anymore but becoming an actual part of people's lives and more specifically their leisure lives.

"While these numbers could arguably be read in different ways, I think that football might be least effected by the downturn because it is so clearly the most desirable ticket," he added.

Sixteen percent said that they had purchased TV sports packages in the last year, and of these, 1% would increase the number, 4% would decrease, 10% would stay the same, and 84% were in the 'don't know/refuse to answer' category.

“There appears to be more uncertainty and more of a wait-and-see approach when it comes to the purchase of cable TV packages offered by the NFL and MLB,” said Gentile.

The poll was conducted by telephone among a random digit dial sample of 664 adults ages 18 and older living in the continental United States, with 67% of them identifying themselves as sports fans. The poll was weighted to reflect the national distribution age, race and gender. The margin of error due to sampling is +/- 3.8% percentage points for most estimates. Other factors also may affect the total error.

About Seton Hall University

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The questions:

Do you frequently attend, occasionally attend, or never attend professional or collegiate sporting events?

Frequently attend	11%
Occasionally attend	39%
Never attend	50%

As a result of what's been happening with the stock market and economy, please tell me if you will be less likely to spend money on entertainment such as going to concerts, movies, sporting events, theater?

Yes	58%
No	39%

(Asked of those that said they would be less likely to spend money on entertainment)

Are you less likely to buy tickets for sporting events?

Yes	76% of sports fans
No	31% of sports fans

Do you have a health club membership?

Yes	23%
No	75%

(Asked of those that have health club memberships.)

Will you be cutting back on your health club membership because of the economic downturn?

Yes	16%
No	80%

Do you play golf?

Yes	21%
No	78%

(Asked of those that play golf)

Will you be cutting back on expenditures for golf because of the economic downturn?

Yes	47%
No	53%

Do you ski?

Yes	16%
No	83%

(Asked of those that ski)

Will you be cutting back on expenditures for skiing because of the economic downturn?

Yes	49%
No	50%

Do you participate in any other sports?

Yes	35%
No	64%

(Asked of those that participate in other sports.)

Will you be cutting back on some of these expenditures because of the economic downturn?

Yes	33%
No	65%

Do you consider yourself a sports fan?

Yes	67%
No	31%

If you decide to cut back on purchasing tickets this year, which sport are you most likely to cut back on: Baseball, Basketball, Football, Hockey, or other?

Baseball	16%
Basketball	18%
Football	20%
Hockey	17%
Other	12%

If you could only buy a ticket to one sport this year, which one would it be: Baseball, Basketball, Football, Hockey, or Other?

Baseball	18%
Basketball	16%
Football	48%

Hockey	7%
Other	9%

Have you bought any college or professional team merchandise, such as team jerseys, hats, etc. in the past year?

Yes	51%
No	48%

(Asked of those that bought merchandise in the last year)

Are you less likely to buy team merchandise because of the economic downturn?

Yes	45%
No	54%

Have you purchased any sports packages on television in the past year; for example NFL Sunday Ticket, MLB Extra Innings, etc?

Yes	16%
No	84%

(Asked of those that purchased sports packages in the past year.)

In the coming year, do you expect to increase; decrease or keep the number of sports packages the same?

Increase	1%
Decrease	4%
Keep the same	10%
Don't know/refuse to answer	84%

Which sport do you think will be most negatively impacted by the economic downturn: Baseball, Basketball, Football, Hockey, or Other?

Baseball	16%
Basketball	14%
Football	19%
Hockey	19%
Other	16%